



## THE NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **President and Vice President call for an end to the government shutdown**

**WINDOW ROCK** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer are calling on President Trump and Congress to end the partial government shutdown and allow funding of tribal programs to continue as day 27 of the longest federal government shutdown in history continues.

“President Trump and Congress, the government shutdown needs to end immediately,” President Nez said. “The shutdown is impacting our Navajo citizens. The federal government has a trust obligation to provide services to the Navajo Nation and other Indian tribes, such as healthcare, education, and public safety. Our Nation also signed a treaty with the United States obligating the federal government to provide those services. Continuing the shutdown is a breach of trust and our treaty.”

Some of the medical personnel working at hospitals on the Navajo Nation are contracted Indian Health Service employees, who are being impacted by the partial shutdown.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is responsible for maintaining 1,600 miles of paved roads and nearly 6,000 miles of dirt roads on Navajo Nation. The shutdown occurred during a period of inclement weather, and limited staff from the BIA was available to clear the roads during several recent snowstorms. As a result, the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation had to clear roads that the BIA could not cover.

Tribally controlled schools and Bureau of Indian Education operated schools are not directly impacted by the shutdown because they received forward funding. However, the BIE operated schools rely on BIE staff for certain administrative services, such as human resources and technical assistance.

The Navajo Nation operates many of the federal programs on the Nation through 638 contracts and these programs can continue operation through the use of carry-over funding. However, these funds will eventually deplete if the shutdown continues.

“There are many Navajo people who also work for the federal government,” Vice President Lizer said. “Our prayers are with those federal workers who have been furloughed and we commend those that continue their work not knowing when they will receive their next paycheck.”

On Friday, President Nez and Vice President Lizer met with the Office of the Controller, Office of Management and Budget, and other officials to receive an update on potential impacts to the Navajo Nation. President Nez said the Office of the President and Vice President would soon initiate a donation drive to help provide basic necessities for furloughed employees.

“We will work diligently to prevent any detrimental effects to our programs and our Navajo citizens. We will continually assess the impact of the shutdown and the ability to access essential federal funds,” President Nez said.

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